Sikkim/J&K; exporters exporting to countries in Latin America/CIS/Sub Sahara Africa and units having ISO 9000 (Series) status. The status holders are eligible for the following special facilities:

— 100% retention of foreign exchange in Exchange Earners' Foreign Currency (EEFC) account;

— Enhancement in normal repatriation period from 180 days to 360 days.

15. All Star Export Houses (including Status holders) which have achieved a minimum export turnover in free foreign exchange of Rs. 10 crore in the previous licencing year are entitled for a duty credit based on incremental exports substantially higher than the general annual export target fixed.

16. To encourage re-location of industries to India, plant and machineries is permitted for import without a licence provided the depreciated value of such relocating plant exceeds Rs. 25 crore.

17. To induce more investment for Research and Development activities, a weighted deduction of 125% on the sums paid to any university, college or an institution or a Scientific research association for the purposes of scientific, social or statistical research is available.

Setting up of Common Service Centres

316. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a framework has been formulated to set up ICT-enabled information and service kiosks, to be called 'Common Service Centres', in villages, to offer certain Government and private services on commercial basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status of its implementation; and

(c) the details of any specific scheme drawn up to motivate the kiosk operators to help proliferate the scheme, especially in the far-flung village clusters, etc?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR.SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Department of Information Technology is in the process of formulating Guidelines/Framework for accelerating proliferation of ICT Enabled Common Service Centres.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Supremacy in the market over private operators

317. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have withstood the competition from the private mobile operators;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts so far taken to ensure supremacy in the market over private operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government telecom operators *viz.* MTNL and BSNL are competing effectively with other private mobile operators by offering service at affordable tariffs and quality of service. MTNL has added a total of 3.56 lakh new GSM mobile connections in Delhi and Mumbai during the current year. BSNL also has been able to achieve 21 % market share within only about 28 months of starting GSM based mobile services. BSNL's cellular subscriber base was 86.9 lakh as on 31-01-2005.

(c) Both BSNL and MTNL have been continuously pursuing an aggressive
approach towards expanding the coverage and introducing value added service to its customers. BSNL plans to augment the existing customer base by another 12 million during 2005. In MTNL, 4 lakh GSM capacity each in Delhi and Mumbai has been added recently. MTNL and BSNL has made drastic reduction in STD, ISD and Cellular tariffs which has contributed to fast growth of telecom sector. Recently Broad Band services have also been launched. Continuous effrots are being made to provide quality service at affordable rates.